DOCUMENT RESUME

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IDENTIFIERS *Book Production

ABSTRACT

A library project designed to increase the independent reading of deaf children involved the initiation of a bookmobile program in the dormitories of a school for the deaf and the adaptation and creation of books that deaf children could use independently. Because it is difficult for deaf persons to grasp abstract concepts in print, high-interest reading materials intended for them require clear simple language structure and numerous photographs for visual clues to meaning. In this project, a survey of student interests revealed that the students preferred books about monsters, famous people, familiar topics (farm life, local history and geography), and motorcycles. In compiling books on these topics the project personnel faced the problems of obtaining printing rights for copyrighted materials, the time involved in securing permission for materials, and effective printing at a minimal cost. While the project was successful in that it produced a number of high-interest low-vocabulary books that stimulated student interest in reading, negative criticism surrounded the poor pictorial quality, the use of illustrations rather than photographs, and the unattractive bindings of the books. (MAI)

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ED166641

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SIMPLIFIED READING MATERIALS FOR LANGUAGE HANDICAPPED PERSONS

WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF
PITTSBURGH PENNSYLVANIA

LSCA TITLE I PROJECT JUNE 1975 - JUNE 1978

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Western Pa. School for the Deaf

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

CS 004 577

SECTION C - DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

2. General description of the project.

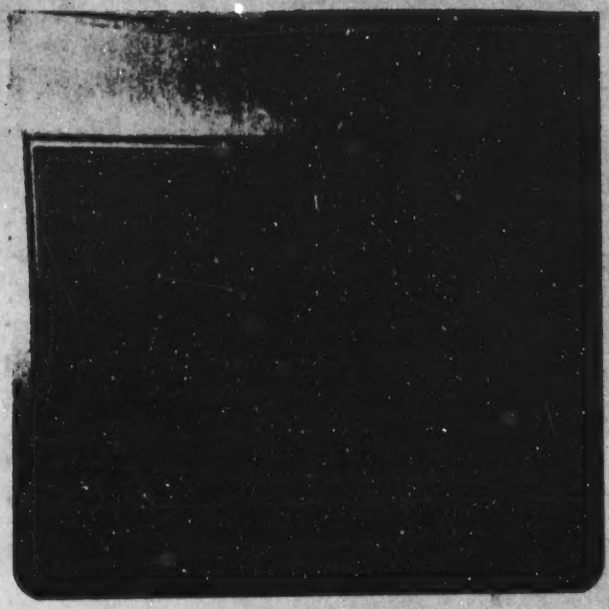
General aims of the project.

The basic L.S.C.A. Title I project at Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf is a program to increase, through library adaptations, independent reading by deaf children. This project is intended (1) to increase the frequency of independent reading by deaf children in Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf; (2) to adapt and create books which these students can use independently; and (3) to initiate a bookmobile program among the dormitories at Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf as a means to further stimulate interest in reading.

Deaf children do not hear the constant flow of words and syntax being spoken around them. Therefore, they have severely restricted linguistic skills. This language deprivation directly affects their ability to read and their incentive to attempt reading. Reading skill is even more crucial for the deaf because of the auditory world in which they live. Television, radio, films, etc. are of limited value because of the dependence on the audio channel.

Outside of the school setting, the deaf must rely on books, newspapers, periodicals and notes to and from others, and captioned TV news where available for necessary information. However, these are the areas of difficulty because the deaf, generally speaking, are not good readers. They, therefore, miss what others can hear and often neglect the area of reading. This leads the deaf to be ill-informed, often misguided and misunderstood. These people frequently isolate themselves because of their lack of knowledge and their awareness of misunderstanding the changing world. In withdrawing from the hearing world, the deaf become more ignorant of it.

Please note the indication at the beginning of the last paragraph "Outside the school setting...". In this school all types of visual materials are used to stimulate language and reading skills and interest. The Library Media Center provides continuing service toward these ends. The L.S.C.A. Title I project is an additional arm (see enclosed picture of project work room door) to stimulate reading and create good reading habits. When reading is a habit and students know that libraries can provide reading materials at various levels, these same students upon leaving the educational setting will continue to be informed and seek out materials of interest.



The deaf are a unique group - dependent on reading skills yet lacking sufficient skills for reading facility. However, there are other groups, too that have reading problems. Some are mentally-retarded; some have learning disabilities; some are just not motivated to read. There are many series of "high-interest, low reading level" materials available. However, "short word, short sentence" structures are not necessarily comprehended by those with reading problems. The deaf can <u>think</u> abstractly, but they do not have the language facility to express themselves. The deaf find it difficult to read the abstract. Books and materials that are of sufficient interest do not reach low enough in reading level to give deaf students some measure of success on which to build. Reading is frustrating -- not fun. It is therefore notrecreational and often not informational enough.

Basically the project is geared for the deaf and some learning disabilities. Mentally-retarded may have the language to express themselves but have trouble relating to the abstract. But, clear simple language structure is a must here also.

Photographs seem to be important for all with reading problems. Photos are more easily understood and visualized than illustrations. They are more real to the reader. "A picture (photograph) shows me at a glance what it takes dozens of pages of a book to expound." They can provide visual clues to help the reader obtain information. Simple illustrations may also be used as long as they are not too confusing with intricate lines.

In order to solve some of these problems, the project staff writes and produces special books to serve the needs of the deaf. The project books differ from existing volumes in that the syntax is greatly simplified. The narrative is accompanied by numerous photographs and some illustrations to further clarify the content. If illustrations are used, they must be uncluttered and not confusing with fine lines or unnecessary detail. Some films have been made to accompany reading materials to promote interest. These materials are then printed and sent to various institutions for field testing.

Another aspect of this project has been the use of "book mobiles" (modified book trucks) in the dormitory areas. Various books were selected and purchased and placed on the dormitory book mobiles. In addition, project books were also placed on the shelves of the book mobile.

The children freely utilize the books in the dormitory. In the evenings, volunteers sit and "read" to the children either in groups or on a one-to-one basis. Often these children come over to the library, which is open in the evenings. The library teacher, Nancy Hovland, would have a story time for them; or, the assistant librarian, Mary Christulides, would have reading activity and skill games. All these encourage carry-over of independent reading from the library to the dormitory areas and motivate children to come to the library more frequently.

4. Describe the method of administering the project.

The Director of the Library Media Center at Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf, Esther M. Shuster, acted as administrator for the project of L.S.C.A. Title I, Project No. 76-20-I, subject to the contract between the State Library of Pennsylvania, Department of Education, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf. The starting date for the project was June 30, 1976, and ended on June 30, 1977. Although June 30, 1977, was the official termination date, there are still some materials yet coming from the project.

A printer, Bob Aker, and a typist/composer, Karen Vormack, were newly hired for the project. The two teachers to adapt and create materials, Kersti Hammermeister and Shelby Culatta; an illustrator/filmmaker, Tippi Comden; an assistant librarian, Helen Kulish, and summer staff members were rehired for the year. These staff members were hired with the project funds.

Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf has made provisions for the L.S.C.A. Project Director (Esther Shuster), the Research Director (Helen Craig) and Business Manager (John Wilson) all of whom devote much time to the project.

In addition the Assistant Media Director, Dale Rusch; and Illustrator, Robert Neisworth, have provided invaluable knowledge and services in techniques and media usage.

Additional equipment was purchased to improve the printing quality of the books. A 3M Promat headliner is used for titles, etc., and an IBM Composer is used for final justified copy. Various sizes of type can be used in this way and the effect is a more professional product. A box camera and lenses were purchased to provide clear, concise photographs. In addition to the actual writing of books, special visual materials were also made to awaken interest and promote reading of the project books. Various projectors and viewers were then bought for these super 8 mm films, slides and filmstrips. Film processing was also done in the darkroom here by the illustrator/filmmaker, Tippi Comden.

With the existing school staff, the additional project staff, the equipment already utilized within the school and the equipment purchases made possible by the project funds, almost all work on the materials has been done within the framework of the school. The only exception has been some photographs which will be discussed in unique characteristics of the project.

5. Describe special or unique characteristics of the project, particular areas of emphasis, and special resources required to conduct this project.

During the first year of the L.S.C.A. Title I project at Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf, materials were basically adapted from existing materials. For example, a biography The Ford Family was compiled. Pictures were used from Time, Newsweek and other periodicals. Articles were summarized and rewritten in clear, concise sentence structure. Other subjects were compiled the same way. Use was limited because of copyright infringement.

This second year of the project meant copy distribution to field test the books for use with other language deprived persons. This field testing needed to be done in order to know if the same types of books for the deaf could be used with other reading deficient populations. In order to make enough copies for distribution, yet keep them within a reasonable cost, the books needed to be printed. However, in order to print and distribute copies all materials needed to be original and/or free of any copyright infringement.

In order to avoid copyright infringement, subjects had to be carefully chosen. Career education, consumer education, Pennsylvania geography and history, and historical fiction were chosen. In addtion, a book on deafness has been written because of requests by students here at Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf. Research had to be done, original manuscripts written and rewritten on a high interest-low reading level, photographs taken, illustrations made where needed and all the layout done for printing. These have been very time consuming steps in a publishing process.

Some of the topics are still in the process of completion. For example, because of the historical nature of the books about people of Pennsylvania, most pictures could not be taken by project members. This meant letters and phone calls to various people and agencies to obtain picture rights. (Famous people of Pennsylvania was the route chosen for books about Pennsylvania because students at Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf relate to biographies and choose biographies as their favorite books.)

One forthcoming book is about the Heinz family of Pittsburgh. Contact was made with the family and corporation to obtain pictures and the right to reproduce them. The

Heinz's were most cooperative but it took time to get the photographs necessary to the text written. Much research was done prior to the contacts. Then more information became available with the pictures. All the facts needed sorting and photographs selected. Because of the value, many of the photographs had to be reproduced by the Heinz Corporation and foundation. Again, their cooperation was invaluable. The time involved has been monumental; bringing high interest topics down to a low enough reading level has been complex and tedious; and accuracy has been observed. And this entire year has been spent on this type of material. It is no wonder that there are so few truly high-interest (non-fiction) low-reading level materials available that really do appeal to the high school student with a reading problem.

Other such materials have required similar action. The Fricks, Carnegie Library, the Mellon Corporation, etc. have made many contributions to books on the Carnegie family, the Mellon family, etc. With a book on deafness and another on hospital careers, Children's Hospital has been very cooperative in having some of their staff photographers do the pictures for the project. These photographers have met with the library project staff members frequently to discuss needs for these books. These people are working

full time at the hospital and are also helping with this project as much as their time will allow.

Yes, the project has been unique in meeting the demands of special group needs and has utilized special resources in making these materials available without copyright infringements.

6. Explain if the objectives to be served by this project are the result of or are influenced by particular economic or social conditions of the area (e.g., primary occupation, population density, depressed area).

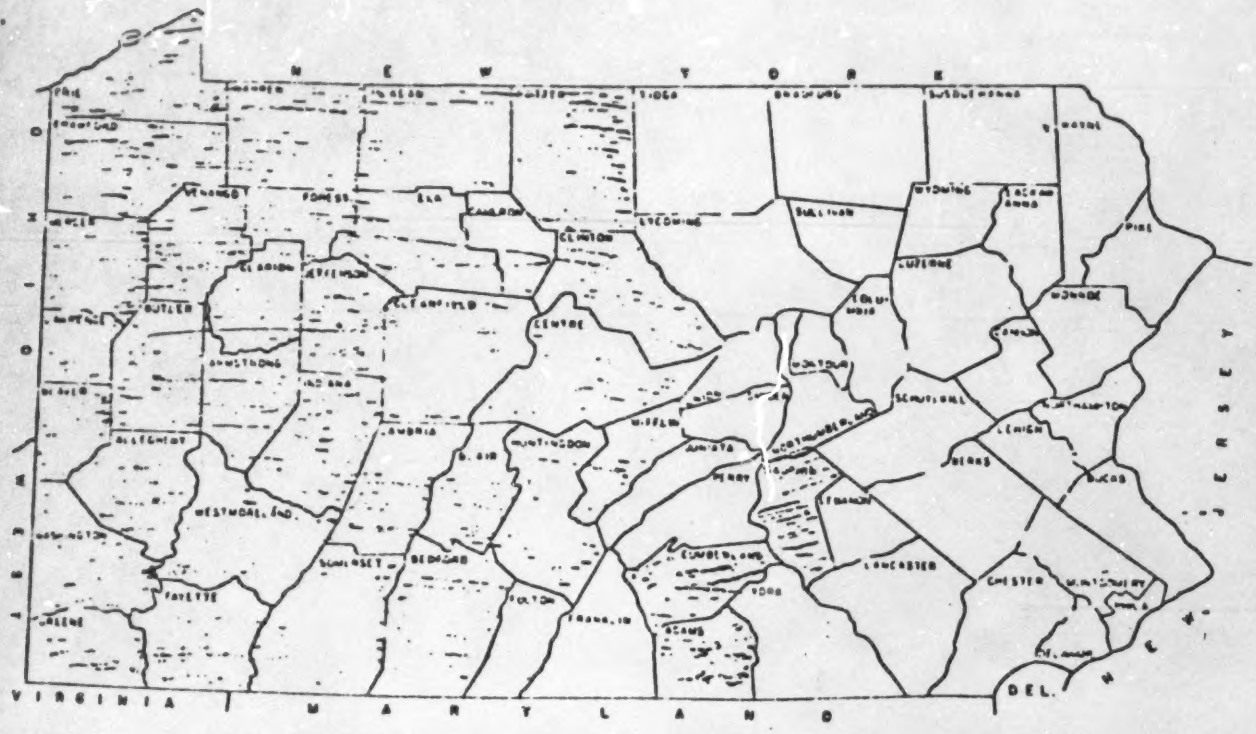
Not applicable.

7. Include a map of the geographical area served by the project, showing both county and congressional district if less than the entire state.

See map on next page.

8. Identify all public and non-public libraries, agencies, organizations, and institutions participating in this project, by name, type of organization.

See list following map.



INDICATES COUNTIES

THE CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS ARE: 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 26

Mrs. Mary Zajac
Altoona Public Library

Mr. Reed Coats
Institutional Library Consultant
Library Development Branch
Virginia State Library
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Mrs. Mary Ann Hanna
Michigan State Library
735 E. Michigan Avenue
Lansing, Michigan 48913

Mr. Nicholas Liguori
C. Howard Marcy State Hospital

Ms. Terri Faye, Librarian
Home for Crippled Children

Mr. Thomas Hudson
Pennhurst State School & Hospital

Mrs. Lee Williams, Students Librarian
Elwyn Institute

Mrs. Frances Tannenbaum
Pennsylvania School for the Deaf

Mrs. Janet Polley
Scranton State Oral

Mrs. Frances McSpedon, Librarian
White Haven State School & Hospital

Mrs. Loretta Farris, Director
Northeastern Area Branch
Luzerne IU #18
368 Tioga Ave.
Kingston, Pa. 18704

Mrs. Frances Pinnel
Eastern State School Hospital

Ms. Marie Davis
Free Library of Philadelphia

Mrs. Charlene Culbertson, Librarian
Craig House Technoma Workshop

Ms. Barbara Kirkman, Librarian
D. T. Watson School

SECTION D - EVALUATION REPORT

Describe accomplishment(s) and failure(s) of the project. Describe problems encountered; special experiences and observations; effectiveness of project. Attach a copy of any materials, prepared for publicity of the project, such as press releases or brochures. Include a copy of feature stories, news reports, and photographs.

High interest low reading level materials have always been a priority here at Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf. However they are interspersed with the "normal" library fare. Upon entering the library here, one would not realize it is a special library without some research. The clue would be the professional library which is geared toward deafness, speech problems and language problems along with other teacher-oriented materials and research. Books for all other levels are intershelved because of the wide age and reading range. The only books that are in a separate section are the professional collection and a small section for very young children -- that is, for primary age children.

With the library project, attention has been especially focused on the students with reading problems -- those with severe language deprivation. With the new books

purchased for this project and the special books made, circulation has increased significantly, especially this project year of 1976-77. This is particularly significant because over the last 3 years there has been a drop in school enrollment. The registration for 1975-76 including adult and children was 592. The circulation was 9646. The the 1976-77 school year, the registration was 571. (Neither of these figures include the nursery school or preschool age children.) The circulation for 1976-77 was 13,104. This is a 27% increase in circulation, yet a 5% drop in registration and approximately a 10% drop in school enrollment.

The books purchased which have been particularly popular are: Bowmar's Search Books, Play the Game Series, and Changing Times Real People at Work. All these series are done in a paper format with lots of photographs and simple language syntax. For the very low level readers, a picture series called A.P.M. Instant Reader printed by Ked Piers Limited and distributed by Bowmar is very helpful.

Because student questionnaires resulted in doubtful results in eliciting reactions about the special project books, personal interviews with students were held. Unless teachers taught this as a lesson, the writing of evaluations became a task and led to inaccuracy. Most students began to think if they read one of the project books, they would be

tested on it, so they either avoided the books -- and/or many of the books disappeared in the process. With personal interviews, the students felt more comfortable. These students also felt more free to evaluate these books honestly without writing it down as a task. They enjoyed the interpersonal relationship and the importance of being asked for their thoughts.

Generally speaking, the students enjoy the books. They feel confident about handling the language in the books. However, one of the most frequent comments concerns enjoyment of seeing other students in the books. For example, one of the most popular books is The Girl and the Bears. Most of the students know the story. We have the book in other published versions yet this project version is more popular. "Not the same as a baby book," and "I know the people in the book", are frequent comments. "This story is easy to understand", and "I like it", are added comments. The Dairy Cows is another popular book, especially among students who live on farms. They indicated that the information was

factual; that they had the same equipment etc. on their farms, and that they could read the book without problems. And, in asking questions about the text, the students indicate by their answers that the books are read and assimilated. With the motorcycle book, which was printed this year, older students say that a Harley Davidson motorcycle should be used, but students in the learning stages were satisfied with the information as it was presented.

Another subject that was much requested was that of vampires. One of the books printed this year was Nosferatu the Vampire. This was a subject that was requested more than any other; but interestingly enough, not read as much. Three classes saw the film Nosferatu (one of the original vampire films but made after Dracula) and these students checked the bock out regularly. Another class made a vampire film of their own and wanted to make a book too as part of their classwork. That class tended to want their own book. Several groups have already asked to use these films for Halloween this year. The popular books, however, on vampires are a series of books called Monster Series by Ian Thorne and published by Crestwood House. These books use photos from Frankenstein, Dracula and other commercial films on monsters and vampires. The Nesferatu book uses photos, but they are taken from the film itself. The pictures

were then developed in high contrast to look like illustrations. The students here definitely prefer the photos from the Monster Series. With these vampire books, pictures are the drawing card. The text is not read as thoroughly as with other text material. Students definitely rely more on the pictures than the text.

When the books are of an informational nature, the students read the text because they want to know and understand the material. They rely on both pictures and text. This was true last year with the Ford book, the Olympics, etc. And, it is also true with The Dairy Cows, Easy Riding, and The Minibike Lesson. However, Nosferatu and The Girl and the Bears are fiction stories. Students here are very familiar with the story of The Three Bears so answered questions reasonably. Nosferatu was not read as carefully because (1) pictures looked like illustrations rather than photographs, (2) students are interested in pictures of monsters but not necessarily the information about them or stories relating to them, (3) the pictures did not portray characters with anyone the students knew. These statements were verified by the student interviews here at the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf.

One of the problems encountered in the production of books was poor picture quality. Easy Riding was photographed with a half-frame camera and enlargements were grainy. Printing then became unclear and contrast was lost. To correct this problem a 35 mm camera was used thereafter. However, The Girl and the Bears has some pictures where there is too much background. Detail then gets lost. In addition, The Dairy Cows has one segment on the birth of a cow taken from a film. Still pictures taken from moving pictures (especially super 8 or 8 mm) are unclear at best. It would have been better to leave this section out rather than to have people think this part was censored or that these were just poorly taken. These pictures are distracting.

Another problem in doing these books for language deprived readers is time. In order to avoid the problems of copyright, all pictures and text had to be original. This meant original research and/or clearing pictures used through the companies or individuals. All this takes much time. Some of the books are not completed for this reason. One is a book about the Heinz family. The Heinz Company has been very cooperative but it took time to get to the person who could reproduce original pictures for us. Some were in an original collection but needed to be reproduced by a photographer within the Heinz Company rather than to risk losing the photos by loaning them. These same problems have caused

delay in a book on the Mellon family, too. One book from last year, The Lion Book, was done with photos from Life Magazine. One of the staff members on the project took a trip to Africa prior to this and had some pictures to use so the book would not be complicated by copyright problems. However, to make it complete, some photos were needed from the tour guide, who had many delays in getting the pictures to us. When he did get the pictures to us, they were in slides so they had to be reproduced in black and white prints so the books could be printed here. Again time is a very necessary and precious commodity in the project and in producing special materials. There is no "cure-all" for all problem readers. In meeting the needs of some special groups, other needs are lost. One cannot meet the needs of ALL in one type of book. There is more about this in the evaluation.

Many super 8 films were made in conjunction with the books. The films were enjoyed in their own right and did not necessarily trigger interest in books. For some, it did; but for just as many more, the films did not trigger interest. The films are enjoyed and used often. The books, too, are enjoyed and read in the library and checked out frequently in their own right. They were not put in "kit form" for this reason. Copies of the films were sent to the

State Library, Bureau of Library Development. However, because of the difficulty in field testing super 8 mm film with different equipment requirements, these films were only used here at the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf.

The books were field tested and there are some others yet to be finished. Here is the field test summary. The individual reports are included in this booklet.

All the books to date are basically high interest, low reading level books printed in black and white. These books use many photographs and a limited amount of language per page. Pictures are explained on the same page rather than arbitrarily placed.

Easy Riding is a basic instructional type of motorcycle book. Photographs needed improvement. There tended to be a lack of contrast and sharpness. Students here commented on this and of course the same comments were made in field test evaluations. Subjects used were selected by students through an interest survey. Essentially, the people who actually used this book felt that the format of the book was fine. When used with mentally retarded, some evaluations indicated a larger print size could have been used effectively. Some thought color would have been good no matter who used the books. Color definitely presents an unreasonable cost factor which is not possible. With the limited number of copies made, the cost per book for color printing would be phenomenal. Labeling of pictures seemed helpful and vocabulary seemed understandable in most cases. Despite the poor quality of the photographs, these did carry the message to the language deprived and non-reader.

Some comments were scathing. However, this type of evaluation form did not indicate actual use with the intended audience. Perhaps librarians looked at the book in comparison to published books which are purchased. "The cover looks like an elementary school yearbook" was one comment. But with the funds available and with a specific audience in mind, some decisions were unavoidable. Again, when used with both deaf and mentally retarded (children and adults) independent reading (the goal of the project) did take place.

The Girl and the Bears is another version of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. However, instead of illustrations, photographs of children here are used and the language is simplified. Again, pictures and text go together page by page. Photographs were not consistent. Some had too much background for printing purposes. There were differing opinions of language and format in general. Again when the books were used with the intended audience, results were favorable such as "easily read" and "good language". When not used, the opinions went from "stilted language" to "inappropriate". Some did not like the use of masks for the bears and felt the cover was unattractive. There is no comparison between the covers for the project and published covers; and other evaluations indicated the enjoyment by children of the "fooling" with masks. All field evaluations are enclosed within the report. Color again was requested.

Nosferatu is a vampire story. The pictures were taken from a film with a cinelarger, then printed on high contrast film to give the effect of black and white illustrations. With this book there seemed to be more controversy, even among the users. Some felt the language level was fine. Others felt it was too high. Some liked the definitions in parentheses; others felt the definitions were too difficult. Some felt the theme of self sacrifice was too deep for the reading level; others felt this book was for a much younger child -- that it talked down to the reader. And, in that case, it was a 16 or 17 year old who reads on a third grade reading level. This is hard to understand. Some felt after teaching to deaf 12 and 13 year olds that although the pictures should be more clear, the reading and language level was excellent. Some people do not realize the language level of deaf people who have gone deaf before speech was learned. The need for reading material at a low enough level is critical and may seem stilted and too simple for those who hear and have two vocabulary levels -- a "conversational" or speaking vocabulary and a "reading" vocabulary. The deaf do not have both of these and have problems with the one they might acquire -- reading.

Dairy Cows, done in the same style format -- photographs and simple language, creates a feeling of openness on each page, uncrowded reading area, and same page layout of photograph and explanation. The pictures in this book are more clear. There is one section that is blurred because the pictures were taken from a film of the birth of a calf. This section should have been excluded rather than to include poor quality pictures. Again there is such diversity in opinion -- again depending on usage -- that it is best to read the evaluations individually.

Each book has taught something new to the production staff. It seems there has been improvement with each step. In spite of the production problems the books have been successful for the intended audience here at Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf. Students pay more attention to books. They look to see who the author is. They skim through the books to see what information is relayed through pictures. With other published more difficult books, the deaf student skims through and is "finished" with the book. When these books are brought to his attention again, the child says "Saw before", and does not want to repeat the procedure. With the project books made especially for the deaf, the students do go back to read. Some say they like

the reading better; others indicate the picture-text placement helps; most prefer the shorter amount of reading per page. The evaluations from other institutions point out that there is nothing that suits everyone -- and there is no one cure-all for reading problems. But, having special materials certainly helps when they are geared to a specific problem.

The book mobile program in the dorms is highly successful. The children look forward to their book time. Volunteers are in the dorms at this time to read with groups of children or to discuss books on a one-to-one basis with a child. The children enjoy this attention and like to choose their books for discussion. This has also increased the evening library time as many of the children in the dorm want to have a wider selection in the library. A copy of our evening hour attendance is included. These students attend the book mobile then come to the library for additional material. This program has increased book mobile usage and library usage as well. Also see the description of the project itself to read more about the book mobile.